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FISH PASSAGE IMPROVEMENT

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An Element of CALFED's
Integrated Storage Investigations Program

Fish Passage Improvement Program

First Annual Inventory and Report

Administrative Review Draft

Department of Water Resources
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Foreword

Steelhead and salmon populations in California streams and rivers have declined dramatically over the past few decades from their abundant historic levels, in part due to loss of habitat. These populations have decreased so drastically that steelhead and some salmon species have been listed as endangered or threatened. Because of these declines, operations of reservoirs and water supply facilities, and land use may be affected as efforts are made to restore and protect the remaining fish and their habitat.

Structures can create fish passage impediments for upstream and downstream migrating fish. Dams, road crossings, culverts, concrete channels, canal and pipeline crossings and old gravel mining pits can block or reduce passage and remove fish habitat. This has been a concern since the late 1800s in California. Efforts to improve fish passage have taken many forms including building fish ladders, screening diversions, remediation of gravel mining pits, and structure removal. It is reasonable to support efforts to evaluate structures in water courses and, if they no longer provide service, or that service can be provided in another, less environmentally damaging way, remove or modify them to improve fish passage. Taking these actions will help balance urban, agricultural, and environmental needs.

The Fish Passage Improvement Program, started in late 1999 as part of CALFED's Integrated Storage Investigations Program, investigates opportunities for improving fish passage by providing engineering and technical resources, coordination, project design and implementation for correcting fish passage problems. This bulletin presents background on the fish passage problem and inventories potential passage problems within the CALFED solution area of the Central Valley and San Francisco Bay Area. It goes on to prioritize projects for funding, evaluation, and implementation. Efforts on many of these priority projects are well under way with consensus-building ongoing by local, state and federal partners. The bulletin details the status of the projects by watershed.

In the program's first year, 18 priority projects potentially affecting 127 structures have been identified. Program activities encompass planning and coordination, engineering design, surveying, biological surveys, environmental documentation, permitting, and project implementation. All of these projects meet program criteria established to identify appropriate opportunities to improve anadromous fish passage. Approximately 480 miles of streams and tributaries would be made more accessible if these priority projects were implemented. Chapter 5 of the bulletin describes each of these projects including schedules and work plans.

This new bulletin series, Bulletin 250 represents a new and important sector of water management necessary to meet the state's objective of providing enough water for all purposes, including more habitat for anadromous fish.

Tom Hannigan, Director

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Lower Sacramento River

Cosumnes River, Sacramento County

Dry Creek–Placer County

Lower Sacramento River–Downstream of Feather River

Putah Creek–Yolo, Napa and Lake Counties

San Joaquin River and Tributaries

Calaveras River–San Joaquin and Calaveras Counties

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Bay Area and Delta

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